

REMARKS

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Amendments to the Specification

The specification has been amended on pages 3 and 4 to remove references to the claims, and to make minor editorial changes, thus rendering moot the objection to the disclosure.

Claim Amendments

The claims have been amended to place them in more conventional U.S. format, and to address the Examiner's concerns, as set forth in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. New claims 27-29 have been added to recite preferred limitations which were deleted from claims 11, 12 and 15, respectively. New claims 30-49 have been added, and correspond to claim 19, but depend upon claims 2-18, and 27-29, respectively.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

The rejection of claims 1-18 as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph has been rendered moot by the claim amendments.

Patentability Arguments

The patentability of the present invention over the disclosures of the references relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting the claims will be apparent upon consideration of the following remarks.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Olerud (US 5,780,005) in view of Jas (US 4,537,699). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention provides an effective process for the efficient utilization of olivine, with a minimum production of waste and with which silica is produced as a product for use, in particular, in the rubber industry.

The Olerud reference describes a process for the production of silica from olivine, which is discussed in the description of the present application. (Please see page 2 of the specification.) Specifically, the reference discloses a process which includes **pre-treatment of the olivine** in order to remove most of the accessory minerals that might otherwise contaminate precipitated silica obtained from dissolving olivine in hydrochloric acid. The abstract of the Olerud reference states “[t]he particles are pretreated and washed for the removal of dust on the grain surfaces and heavy materials such as spinel and at least part of the foliar and stem-like minerals such as serpentine, talc and pyroxene are removed.” The known process according to Olerud deals with **pre-treated olivine**, and is thus economically expensive.

Further, it is demonstrated that acid strength, temperature, and leaching time all have an effect on the specific surface area of the silica. However, the known process according to Olerud **fails to take into account the CTAB specific surface area** of the silica obtained.

Moreover, the Examiner admits that Olerud fail to teach the use of sodium aluminate to lower the viscosity of the silica slurry. The Examiner relies upon the Jas reference as teaching the addition of sodium aluminate. However, the Jas reference does not relate to the production of olivine at all. In fact, Jas does not even mention the word olivine. Rather, Jas is concerned with improving the rheological properties of silica by adding an aluminum compound to a water silica suspension. This corresponds to **one of the steps** of the present claim 1. However, Jas fails to even mention any of the further steps of Applicants’ claimed process, such as ageing, dispersing the aged slurry, removing fine mineral impurities, and drying the silica. Accordingly, Jas relates to a totally different process, and has nothing in common with the claimed process, except for the addition of an aluminum compound. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not look to the teachings of Jas to remedy the deficiencies of Olerud, absent the teachings of Applicants’ disclosure, and therefore, Jas fails to remedy the deficiencies of the primary reference.

For the reasons provided above, the invention of claims 1-18 is clearly patentable over the cited combination of references. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Therefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that each of the grounds of objection and rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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